

Representative

# Jeannie DARNEILLE

27<sup>th</sup> District

## It's All About Community!



January 2002

Dear Neighbor,

**The horrible events of September 11 have made us look again at what is important in our lives. In the immediate aftermath of the tragedy, people from all walks of life lined up to volunteer their time, their talents, their money, their blood. That outpouring of assistance was just overwhelming.**

I would like to encourage you to continue with that spirit in our own community. There are so many organizations right here at home that need our help to continue providing their valuable services. In my family, we volunteer to help with issues relating to homelessness, literacy and learning English as a second language.

Please call the United Way Volunteer Opportunity Center in Tacoma at (253) 572-4357. Talk with Rick or Sean or one of the volunteers. They know all about current volunteer needs in hundreds of non-profit human-services programs in Pierce County and can send you a list. Or visit their Web site at [www.uwpc.org](http://www.uwpc.org).

A few months ago, I sent you a government guide that listed many state agencies and their phone numbers; most will have local offices that work with community-based organizations that could use your help. If you'd like to look at that again, you can find it on my Web page at this address: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/house/members/newsletttr/darneille01GovGuide.pdf>.

**I can think of no better way to start a new year than by giving our community a gift of your time.**

Thank you,

**Jeannie Darneille**  
State Representative  
27<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



## Our state budget

**Balance is the key as we work toward fair solutions.**

The national recession has finally hit home here in our state of Washington.

Once-prosperous industries and once-thriving businesses are having to struggle just to stay afloat – and many of them, in fact, aren't making it. When it comes to our state budget, the economic slump and the energy crisis — plus other factors such as a higher-than-expected enrollment in our public schools and a higher-than-expected population in our prisons and other corrections facilities — have created our budget challenge.

A few weeks before the legislative session started, Governor Locke offered a supplemental-budget proposal.

The governor's plan would cut several hundred million dollars out of the state budget — and raise no general taxes — to get the budget back in balance. We'll use the governor's ideas as a starting point in our discussion.

We must balance our state's responsibilities to our citizens and families – and do so with the revenues we have available in the state treasury. In tough budget times, we must step up to the plate and limit state spending in some areas.

But which budget areas? **Clearly, the challenge to meet the needs of our citizens, businesses, and municipalities is critical.**

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### Toll-free Legislative Hotline:

1-800-562-6000

### Toll-free Legislative Hotline for hearing-impaired citizens (TTY):

1-800-635-9993

### Committees:

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Health Care  
Children & Family Services

### Legislative Assistant:

Josephine Quiles-Negroni

Our  
community  
safety

People — all of us — have a right to feel safe in our homes, schools, and businesses — and anywhere else around our community.

The terrorist attack against our country was and still is a tragic reminder that our work is never done to strengthen health and safety standards. Legislators this year will search for ways to assure safety for the public – as well as security for public buildings and other facilities. **We must find a balance between bolstering public safety and maintaining individual rights.**

I'd like you to consider something else, too, with respect to community security.

Our children should be as safe and secure as reasonably possible when they go to school. We have a right — they have a right! — to feel confident that they're not going to be bullied and attacked. This basic, essential right for schoolchildren is part of the community-security responsibility — beyond the important security responsibilities that have arisen out of the September terrorist attacks — that I want the Legislature to resolve in this year's session.

Our streets  
and highways

Letting our transportation infrastructure fall this far behind is certainly no way to plan for the future.

No one knows better than Tacoma and Pierce County motorists, riders, passengers, and even pedestrians what a nightmare it is on the roads, streets, highways, railways, and ferries of our state. The transportation challenge confronting us is summed up in these statements:

- Suppose you have the top company in the world. Now suppose that people — your employees and your potential customers — can't even make it to your door because they're stuck out in traffic? That just isn't acceptable.
- Suppose you make the best goods and products. Now suppose you can't get them to port or market because they're stuck out in traffic? That, too, is simply unacceptable.
- Suppose you're committed to running a good business or pursuing a good career. Now suppose you can't get anywhere with it because you're spending too many hours stuck out in traffic? Yes – this is no more acceptable than the first two scenarios!

Frankly, I believe that a decent level of economic development — and, therefore, a decent level of opportunity for our Washington families — is doomed without a decent transportation system.

The governor offers a solution he maintains will raise several billion dollars in the next 10 years to pay for transportation improvements.

His plan would increase the gas tax — which hasn't gone up in more than a decade — by nine cents statewide. Another proposal suggests a four-cent hike in the gas tax statewide — with an option for Pierce County and some other large local communities to further raise it if their citizens want more improvements. Still another idea states: "Let's send this whole question to the voters to decide for themselves." I support the first option, but will work with other members on any compromise with an outcome that will get us moving!

P.S.

The *Citizens' Guide* I sent a few months ago listed an old e-mail address for United States Senator Maria Cantwell. Her current e-mail address is [maria@cantwell.senate.gov](mailto:maria@cantwell.senate.gov).

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